

# CROSS THE CORRIDOR

Synopsis of Chapters Already Published

Phil Daring and Bob Stevens, two cousins, live with their rich uncle, John Stevens, who has made out a will in which the first of his nephews to marry with his approval receives \$50,000, the rest of his estate being divided equally between the boys. Stevens threatens to change the will in favor of Phil, as Bob has proven unworthy. The night before the will is to be altered Stevens is found dead, poisoned by nitric acid, while his servant, Eben, is found unconscious, at the same time. Phil and Bob accuse each other of the crime. Eben recovers consciousness, but is unable to articulate, so what he knows of the murder remains a mystery. Bob tells the coroner's jury that Phil gave him a poisoned cough-drops, and produces evidence others from the same box filled with the deadly acid. Phil claims that the box has been changed. Both are arrested and placed in the same cell. A telegram arrives for Phil which Bob claims, and Phil knocks his cousin unconscious in a paroxysm of rage.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN SEPARATE CELLS.

Phil Daring stood over his cousin's prostrate body.

He was glad that he had knocked him down. It was the first time that Phil had ever struck Bob, but he was glad now that he had. His nerves had been screwed up to such a tension all day that he found great relief in exercising them brutally on his own behalf.

The telegram belonged to him, and he had merely jumped in and struck in order to preserve his own property. It was right, and he felt better and better for having done it.

The guard threw the door open on the instant that Phil had struck his cousin. Stepping in he jerked Phil into the corridor, handcuffed him and gave him in charge of another attendant, who had come running up.

"I guess he's the murderer, all right," said the guard, significantly, as he glared at Phil.

Bob was struggling to get up. The guard jerked him to his feet.

"I'll get her yet," were the first words he spoke, and the force with which they came out showed that they had been in his mind when Phil had knocked him unconscious.

"What do you mean?" Phil shouted back at him.

The other prisoners were pressing close against their bars and looking out, some grinning, others seeming frightened at the sudden breach of prison etiquette.

"I mean that I'll win Alice away from you in spite of everything. She was mine once and I'll have her again."

"You coward," cried Phil, "to mention her name here."

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"You'll live to see me married to her yet," he called out.

"You shut up, too," bellowed the guard in the cell with him, and a cuff silenced Bob.

He slunk to a corner of his cell like a whipped dog.

Phil was led to the center of the corridor and watched, until two peaceful prisoners had been placed in the same cell with each other, and then he was unceremoniously shoved into the vacated one. His handcuffs were removed, and he was left alone.

It was some time before he recovered from the heat of his struggle with Bob. Suddenly he remembered the telegram that was still clutched in his hand. Smoothing it carefully out he read the message slowly. A light of relief flooded his face, and he breathed a little harder.

Then he hurriedly brought the message close to his eyes and read it again.

"Phil Daring, Dutton police headquarters. Just heard I believe in you. Can I help in any way?"

So that was what Bob had refused to give it to him.

He understood it all now. His younger cousin had evidently intended to destroy the message, and then taunt Phil with the fact that even Alice had lost faith in him.

"You ought to be put in a solitary cell," a harsh voice suddenly broke on his ears, and Phil looked up to see the ugly guard glaring down at him.

"For what?"

"For startin' a fight. I wisht we

By ROBERT CARLTON BROWN

AUTHOR OF

"THE BURDEN OF PROOF"

had a solitary here. But when you get to the pen you'll find they've got em there, an' if you try any of them tricks you'll get throwed in, see?"

Phil made no reply. The man sickened him. A wiry, ugly little beast. To think that this fellow had the right to force his remarks on him! To think that he could be ordered around by such a man!

Phil knotted his fingers into his palms and with difficulty refrained from making an angry reply.

Having made a few insulting remarks, the guard withdrew and Phil alone again. Then the prisoner recalled what had been said.

"The pen," he mused to himself. Then he broke off with a shrill cry. "My God! Does he mean the penitentiary?"

"Things had piled up suddenly that the young fellow had not had time to consider the possible punishment for the crime of which he was accused. It came to him now in what a serious plight he was.

He must find some way out of this. He knotted his fingers into his palms and with difficulty refrained from making an angry reply.

Just as this thought occurred to him he looked up and saw the same shifty-eyed guard padding down the stone corridor, and beside him was a long, professional-looking man in black.

"Mr. Rogers!" cried Phil, pressing against the bars.

For he had recognized the man at once as his uncle's lawyer.

"The latter stopped up to the cell and looked in at the prisoner.

"Mr. Daring," he said, slowly, "it is very painful for me to see you here. Dr. Lyons told me of the case, and of the way it looked to him, and I have come to offer my services."

"What does he want of me?" asked the young man, looking at him with a questioning eye.

"I don't know what he wants of you," answered the other, lowering his voice. "But look out here for a minute."

Phil followed the lawyer's gaze and saw his cousin's cell. Inside was a man dressed in a frock coat, his back to the bars. Evidently it was a visitor talking to Bob.

"What is he?" queried Phil, curiously.

"What is he doing inside the cell?" "The State's attorney,"

"I thought they didn't allow that," Phil went on.

"They don't that is—not to everybody," was the quiet reply.

"Then why is he there?" "Because he's the State's attorney."

"I leave that to your imagination," smiled the other.

After a few more words, Mr. Rogers left. Phil sat in his cell alone. His head was in a whirl.

He had heard so much in such a short time and there was a great deal to wonder about. He could not determine in his own mind just what Mr. Rogers meant about Bob's trial.

Phil looked down and did not seem to be curious about the remainder of the details.

"And that is Miss Arlington. The remainder of the estate is to be divided equally among you boys."

"What I want to know," Phil inter-

rupted, "is whether or not we can use the money in making out our case?"

"Well, I don't know," replied the other. "The will probably will appear as a strong motive and it may be tied up in the courts."

"But without money how am I going to make a fight?"

"I think I can rely on your honesty, Mr. Daring. If you will accept my service, as a friend of your uncle's I will be very glad to serve you on both cases, and you can pay me whenever you get the money that is coming to you."

"Which will be after I'm cleared?" queried Phil.

"Probably. I don't see any possibility of getting it before," was the cautious reply.

"From what Dr. Lyons has told you of my case what do you think of my chances?" he asked.

"The lawyer hesitated and hawed. "Well, well, it is a very dubious thing. I see little chance for acquittal, but I'll see what we can do to get you a light sentence and then take it through the higher courts."

"But that takes money," objected Phil. "He could hardly realize the other was saying there was little chance for him. He had done nothing and was not afraid."

"Yes, of course, it takes money," Mr. Rogers smiled, ingratiatingly. "But isn't your life worth money, Mr. Daring?"

"My life!" cried Phil, as it came to

him for the first time that his life itself was the stake.

If the case went against him he would lose it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS.

FOR half an hour Phil went over the details of his case with the lawyer. The more he talked about it the less hope he had of his acquittal.

"They probably will urge the will as a motive and, by altering the facts, make it appear that your uncle intended to cut you off," said Mr. Rogers.

"How can they do that?" cried Phil. "It was just the other way; Bob was to be disinherited."

An inscrutable smile flickered across the face of the attorney.

"The law can do anything, young man. You want to remember that the State's attorney's office has almost any power that they choose to use."

"But Bob, what chance will he have at his trial?" exclaimed Phil, in wonder, for the case seemed to be as bad for his cousin.

Another professional smile passed over the main face of the other. He looked keenly at Phil.

"Do you think Bob will be tried?" was his question.

"Why not? Wasn't he arrested, too?" "Yes," answered the other, lowering his voice. "But look out here for a minute."

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and began brushing them off a little in order to make a fair appearance in court.

"Never mind that!" ordered the guard. "You ain't supposed to look pretty. Come on!"

Phil went out obediently, and started down the corridor beside the guard. He revolved from his surroundings with a strange sensation when he saw his fellow-criminals peering out at him and heard one explain to his cellmate.

"Yes, he's the fellow that murdered old Stevens for his money last night."

"A lot of good the money'll do him now," answered the other, with a harsh laugh.

The guard grinned and looked up to see how his prisoner took the remarks. Phil felt about for some excuse to cover his confusion.

Suddenly he noticed that Bob's cell was empty.

"Where's my cousin?" he asked quickly.

"Guess he's out for the afternoon," smiled the guard, looking at Phil as though he were an innocent babe.

"Has he been taken in for a hearing?" continued Phil, trying to get at the guard's meaning.

"Still trying to fool yourself, arn't you?" answered the other, with a strange look that made Phil feel uneasy.

"What do you mean?" asked the young fellow.

"Oh, nothing much. Now shut your fly trap. Here we are." As he spoke the guard opened a door with his foot and shoved Phil into a stifling little courtroom, packed full of curious onlookers. As he entered, Phil made out an audible murmur that passed through the audience. Evidently they were waiting for him.

He sat dully through the hearings that these men received. Some of them were "plum drunks," others petty thieves.

A shiver ran through him as he saw them answer to their names by taking their place at the rail before the judge. He could picture himself standing there. It was not a pleasant picture.

Curiously he glanced around for Bob. He could not understand what had befallen him when he sought for an explanation.

Suddenly he saw Bob. The young fellow was standing outside of the iron fence that divided the prisoners and the justice from the spectators.

He was smiling and talking in a confidential manner to a big, bluff man beside him. Phil thought at the time

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THE WASHINGTON TIMES, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 1909.

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